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ABSTRACT

"Phonics with Feeling" is a teacher-written phonics-based literature series promoting student self esteem and self expression. The 4- to 6-week project has been used with first and second grade students for 2 years. "Phonics with Feeling" is a series of four books, each reinforcing a specific phonetic skill while integrating other curricular areas such as problem solving, mapping, math, and art. After being introduced to a phonetic skill, students are given their own copy of the book which reinforces that specific skill. Students illustrate their books, share them at school, participate in a culminative activity, and then take them home to share with their families and add to their libraries. Teachers can write their own series of books to reinforce their own reading program. Materials needed for the project include a word processor to create the books, a photocopier, maps, and whatever other materials teachers decide to use for culminating activities. (RS)

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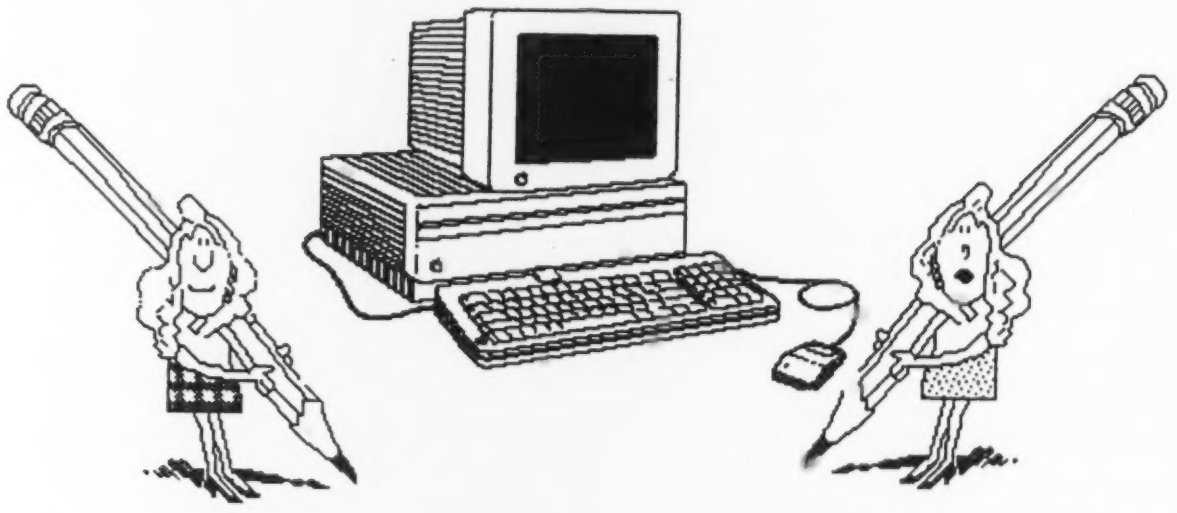
Phonics With Feeling



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Phonics With Feeling

Phonics With Feeling is a teacher written phonics based literature series promoting student self esteem and self expression. The project has been used with first and second grade students for the past two years. After being introduced to a phonetic skill, students are given their own copy of the book which reinforces that specific skill. Students illustrate their books, share them at school, participate in a culminating activity, and then take them home to share with their families and add to their libraries!

Sarah Carlson and Wanda Heath are two elementary teachers at Mallett School in Farmington who created this project two years ago. The project was started because of the lack of affordable phonics programs on the market that use literature that is creative enough to hold a child's interest.

Project Goals and Outcomes

Phonics With Feeling is a series of four books, each reinforcing a specific phonetic strategy while integrating other curricular areas such as problem solving, mapping, math, and art. Each rhyming text ends with an innovative activity and the student created illustrations generate a high level of enthusiasm and success in mastering phonetic skills. Success of the project is measured by student interest, attitude, sound checklist (which becomes part of a student's portfolio), parent feedback, and completion of the end of book activity.

Purpose

The main character of the four books is a dog named Spike who thrills his readers with his many adventures. Each story leads into the next one in the series. The first book focuses on long vowel words. The book is titled The Space Race and Spike visits parts of the solar system and ends up on Pluto at an alien feast. This book's culminating activity has the children writing a menu for the alien feast, which could lead into a unit on nutrition. The second book continues Spike's adventures on Pluto and teaches r-controlled vowels with the introduction of Omar the alien. A sample page from the book - "Spike has hurt Omar's pride. Even aliens have feelings inside." leads into problem solving activities involving feelings. The activity at the end of this book has students solve math problems to break a code and discover where Spike is headed next. The third book, Spike Hits the Woods, concentrates on oo words. In the story Spike orbits the moon and then crashes in the woods of northern Maine. The ending activity has students using a map key and locating Maine landmarks to help

Spike find his way back to Farmington. The fourth book features the digraphs sh, th, ch, and wh and Spike makes several new friends - Charlie the moose, Shane and Shawn the chipmunks, and Thelma the raccoon. This book differs from the others in that it was illustrated by Eric Heath. Another difference is that it has an epilogue as a way of ending Spike's adventures. The activity in this book involves compass reading.

Two first and second grade classes participated in this project over a four to six week period. The project was implemented in small groups, but is flexible enough to be used for any group size. Regular classroom teachers, special service teachers, and remedial teachers could implement this project on their own. Time involved in creating the books will vary among individuals.

Procedures and Instructions for Starting Your Own Series

1) Find someone to work with. It's too much work for one person alone and it's a great deal of fun to bounce ideas off one another. We also found that our writing sessions were great stress reducers!

2) Choose several phonetic skills that you would like to reinforce in your reading program. Think of a main character that the children will enjoy.

3) Create and print your books in a fashion that follows your style and satisfies your students' needs.

4) Think of culminating activities that can extend into your existing curriculum.

5) Be creative - let those ideas flow! Ask for student ideas. Let your creativity enhance other curricular areas. We've also written several "one shot" books to add to our social science program in areas such as the environment and maple sugaring.

Resources

Materials needed for the project are: word processor to create original books (We used Children's Writing and Publishing.), photocopier, maps and compasses, and whatever other materials teachers decide to use for culminating activities. The costs involved would include paper and printing costs.

Conclusion

Phonics With Feeling is a unique reading program in the fact that the books are teacher written following a theme with the children's interests coming first. The project is effective because the children learn the skills while thoroughly enjoying the books and activities. We created books that fulfilled our curricular requirements in many subject areas while stimulating student creativity, problem solving and knowledge of skills, as well as, promoting reading enjoyment. We feel that the success of this project greatly enhanced our reading program. It has also improved our own self esteem, giving us the confidence and desire to continue creating new books for future use.